



**General Certificate of Education (A-level)
January 2011**

Religious Studies

RSS07

(Specification 2060)

Unit G New Testament

Report on the Examination

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General Comments

Overall, the quality of answers saw an improvement on those seen in previous exams. However, there were a significant number of scripts that suggested that the candidate had been entered too early and would have benefited from waiting until the summer exam. Surprisingly the most popular question was question 1, yet it also seemed the one that candidates were least prepared for. Equally surprising was that question 4 was the least popular question.

A significant number of centres had entries where the entire candidature selected the same choice of questions. It was not clear whether these centres had prepared candidates for only two of the four areas, or whether they just preferred those particular topics. It has been noted in previous examiner's reports that to reduce the content to the bare minimum of two areas is to give a student a very limited experience of the subject.

Answers from the same centre frequently followed a similar pattern, which suggested that candidates were repeating class notes regardless of the focus of the question asked. Both AO1 and AO2 questions have a clear focus. It is this tendency to ignore the focus of a question that remains the major reason for underperformance by candidates.

Question 1

01 Some candidates attempted this question without showing evidence they had studied the topic. They reinterpreted it as a question about the synoptic problem and so wrote at length about the sources of the synoptic gospels.

Other candidates struggled to find more than one reason for why the original Greek synoptic gospels texts had been translated into other languages. In contrast, there were a number of candidates who gave full and detailed answers showing knowledge of the Peshitta and Latin Vulgate as well as Coptic versions, and used these to good effect as illustrations. Higher level answers discussed a variety of reasons, including the need for a standard text that could be used and the importance of reading in one's own language.

02 A significant number of candidates changed the focus and debated whether the original text was accurate. However, there were some good answers showing reasoning and analysis.

Question 2

03 A few candidates discussed the wrong parable. Others just repeated the explanation in the text. Higher level candidates broadened the discussion to findings from form and redaction criticism that suggested the parable had a variety of meanings depending on the "life situation". Others made links to the Kingdom and entering through the word, and the rich harvest.

04 There were some good answers that showed analysis and reasoning. It was encouraging to see many candidates moving away from a list of points that resembles more an AO1 answer and, instead, actually evaluating and weighing up arguments.

Question 3

05 Despite candidates having access to Bibles in the exam, many candidates seemed unable to draw out many differences. Instead, they wrote out the narrative but even that was often wrong and confused. Some candidates did not read the question carefully and either omitted the arrest material or went beyond the trial and included Jesus' death and even his resurrection.

However, there were an encouraging number of candidates who gave focussed answers and were awarded the top levels.

- 06** This was an issue that most candidates felt confident in discussing. However, there was a tendency to list arguments for and arguments against. Again, it should be noted that this style of answer does not show a reasoned, evaluative response and so can not be awarded top levels.

Question 4

- 07** This was the least popular question and the least well answered. Candidates tended to ignore the focus about the accounts being historical and gave a narrative account of the appearances. Very few referred to the road to Emmaus story or the occasion when Jesus made clear he was not a ghost.
- 08** Candidates were weakest on this question compared to the other AO2 questions. The focus of “little importance for Christian faith” was often ignored. Only a few candidates could give answers that had a variety of arguments on each side. Candidates need to be aware of the issues listed in the specification.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.